

FACT SHEET

The information contained in this Fact Sheet is intended to provide support information to those public stakeholders with an interest in the Jupiter Corridor Alternatives Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The South Florida Regional Transportation Authority's (SFRTA's) Tri-Rail service is Florida's only commuter railroad. Tri-Rail operates along the 72-mile South Florida Rail Corridor (SFRC) that generally runs parallel to Interstate-95 (I-95), connecting Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. Tri-Rail provides commuter rail service to passengers traveling within the tri-county area.

To the north, Tri-Rail service begins in Palm Beach County at the Mangonia Park Station, near 45th Street and ½-mile east of I-95, and terminates in the south at the Miami International Airport Station in Miami-Dade County east of NW 42nd Avenue and south of State Route 112 (SR 112). The system includes six stations in Palm Beach County, seven stations in Broward County and five stations in Miami-Dade County.



Exhibit 1 - Tri-Rail commuter rail service

NEED FOR MOBILITY ENHANCEMENTS

Rapid growth has characterized Florida's southeast coast, including Palm Beach County and Martin County, for the last 20 years. This growth is concentrated in a relatively narrow band extending north-south along the coast, from Martin County south through Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade Counties. This area of high growth is constrained on the east by the Atlantic Ocean and on the west by environmentally-protected areas. Consequently, the pattern of development is linear and relatively dense and continuous.



Exhibit 2 - Traffic congestion in south Florida

As this region has continued to add population it has also experienced increasing travel congestion. There is high demand for north-south travel, and there are relatively few north-south major highways. Since the area of development is tightly constrained, there are almost no opportunities to add a sufficient number of new travel lanes to meet the travel demand. In response to these circumstances, SFRTA has initiated this Alternatives Analysis to evaluate opportunities to provide premium transit in the Jupiter Corridor.

STUDY BACKGROUND

Premium transit service in the Study Corridor has been included in the SFRTA/Tri-Rail 2020 Long Range Master Plan, (March 2002) and the SFRTA South Florida Transit Analysis Study (September 2003). In the Master Plan the transit alternative described is an extension of Tri-Rail commuter rail service along the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway alignment.

This alternative is an adopted project in the Palm Beach County MPO's Long Range Plan, and has been endorsed by local governments. This is one alternative that will be considered in the study process as well as a "No-Build", "Transportation System Management" (TSM) and several "Build" Alternatives.

PURPOSE OF THE ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

The Federal Transportation Act, known as TEA-21, requires that all projects for transit improvements and investments in a metropolitan area emerge from a regional, multi-modal transportation planning process, be publicly reviewed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and must have resulted from an Alternative Analysis study in order to seek federal “New Starts” funding for any proposed project. The Alternatives Analysis will provide local decision makers with the information necessary to determine the most appropriate alternative to move forward in the NEPA process.

The Alternatives Analysis is intended to evaluate the costs, benefits and impacts of a range of modal and alignment alternatives to enhance mobility in the Jupiter Corridor. The alternatives to be considered include “Build” Alternatives, those being commuter rail and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternatives, a “No-Build” alternative, and a “Transportation Systems Management” (TSM) alternative. The “No-Build” alternative is defined as the funded portions of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations’s (MPO) Long Range Plan. The BRT and TSM alternatives will be defined in the course of this analysis. These alternatives will be evaluated for effectiveness and a recommendation will be made to local governments and the Palm Beach County MPO for the adoption of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). This will be followed by a “New Starts” submittal to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and a request to enter into Preliminary Engineering and complete the NEPA process.



Exhibit 3 - Miami-Dade County Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

THE JUPITER CORRIDOR

This Alternatives Analysis will consider mobility enhancements in a study area called the Jupiter Corridor. This Corridor extends from the south part of the City of West Palm Beach, going north about 16 miles to the Town of Jupiter. A possible extension further north into Martin County will also be considered. Major north-south arterials in this area include Interstate-95 and Florida's Turnpike on the western edge of the study area, as well as Old Dixie Highway/State Route A1A (SRA1A) and US 1 on its eastern edge. The Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway corridor parallels Old Dixie Highway/SR A1A through the study area. In the southern portion of the study area Tri-Rail service extends from the south to the Mangonia Park Station, along the CSXT/South Florida Rail Corridor (SFRC).

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IMPROVEMENTS UNDER DESIGN OR CONSTRUCTION FOR TRI-RAIL

SFRTA is working to increase the frequency of Tri-Rail service along the Corridor. The construction of the final approximately 45 miles of second mainline track will allow Tri-Rail to achieve enhanced on-time performance, greater flexibility to increase the frequency of train service. To obtain this level of service, Tri-Rail must provide two separate tracks for the system from the Mangonia Park Station in Palm Beach County, to the Miami International Airport Station in Miami-Dade County.

The Double Track Corridor Improvement Program, Segments Project is currently underway, with construction ongoing in various locations. It is anticipated that construction will be completed in the year 2005.



Exhibit 4 - Tri-Rail commuter rail station

In addition to the Double Tracking Program, the SFRTA intends to extend Tri-Rail service to Jupiter and northward. This improvement will require the addition of support facilities to allow the system to operate efficiently. This includes the addition of a Maintenance and Layover Facility near the northern terminus of the current Tri-Rail system.

MAINTENANCE & LAYOVER FACILITY

The increase in service capacity due to the Double Track Program, combined with a planned northern extension of Tri-Rail to Jupiter and northward, will require a facility, in or near, the north terminus of the existing South Florida Rail Corridor (SFRC), in Palm Beach County, to maximize efficiency of the system.

A Maintenance and Layover Facility is a property where the combined functions of train maintenance and train storage are accomplished. The maintenance portion of the Facility is where minor mechanical, electrical and other train services are provided. The layover portion of the Facility is a series of tracks where trains are stored during non-operating hours. A computer generated conceptual rendering of the proposed site is shown in Exhibit 5 below.



Exhibit 5 - Conceptual rendering of a Maintenance and Layover Facility

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The SFRTA will conduct a series of public workshops to answer questions and receive input from those potentially affected by this study and the proposed facility. This input is sought to ensure that all potential impacts are identified, and if possible, mitigated prior to finalization of the environmental process. Once these public workshops have been conducted, the documentation will be finalized, and an official public hearing will be held to make the final determination as to the location of a new maintenance and layover facility.

The overall objective related to the alternatives analysis schedule is to complete the analysis so that a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) can be adopted in June or July of 2004 by the Palm Beach County Metropolitan Planning Organization and the SFRTA Board of Directors and reviewed by the Federal Transit Administration in July of 2004. This will allow a New Starts submittal to be made in August of 2004, so that any proposed project can be eligible for the next Federal funding cycle.

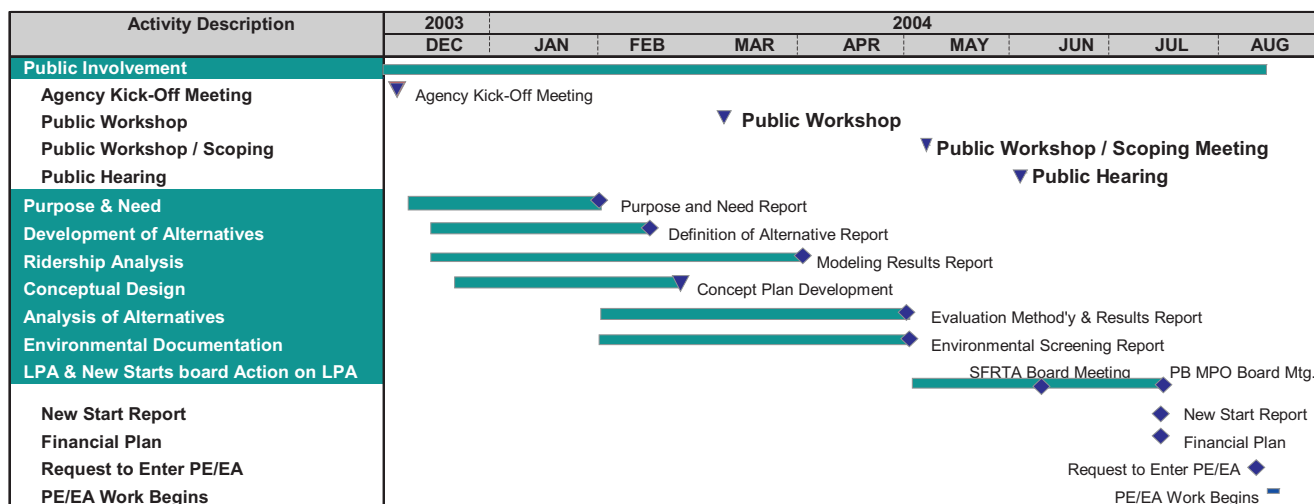
STUDY CONTACTS

If you have questions or comments regarding this project, please contact us:

Mr. Jonathan Roberson
Transportation Planning Manager
South Florida Regional Transportation Authority
Tel: (954) 788-7958 Fax: (954) 788-7965
E-mail: robersonj@sfrta.fl.gov

Mr. William Boothe
Alternatives Analysis Manager
Tel: (786) 464-1000 Fax: (786) 845-7119
E-mail: william.boothe@parsons.com

STUDY SCHEDULE



800 NW 33rd Street, Suite 100
Pompano Beach, FL 33064